
disunity, as expectations were raised and dashed, and then raised and dashed again." The continuing failure to resolve the matter lessened Canadians' faith in their leaders. "Worse, it has produced government by bribery, under which Ottawa has continually attempted to purchase the loyalty of Quebecers." Between 1970 and 1990, by University of Calgary economist Robert Mansell's estimate, Ottawa poured over \$160 billion more into Quebec than it took out in tax revenues.

Ottawa also gave greater recognition to the French language and tried to counter the notion that this was mainly a Quebec matter. The Official Languages Act of 1969 designated both French and English official languages of Canada and "decreed that federal government services should be provided in either language in the capital and throughout the country wherever there was 'sufficient demand,'" Dale Thomson, a political scientist at McGill University in Montreal, notes in the *Annals*. The act also provided for federal financial support for second-language education. Quebec, however, took the view that the French language was the basis of its "distinct society," and that therefore, French and English could not have equal standing in the province. Under the 1977 Charter of the French Language, only the French version of government documents was to be legally binding, and public signs, with only rare exceptions, were to be in French. When

the Supreme Court of Canada in 1989 declared the law forbidding the use of English on public signs unconstitutional, Quebec used a loophole in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to re-enact the original language law. "English-speaking Canadians were outraged," observes David Bercuson.

Canada today is a country of two fundamentally different worldviews, Bercuson says. "English-speaking Canadians conceive of Canada as a nation of individual citizens who are equal before the law—regardless of the language their forbears spoke—and who live in a federation of provinces with equal constitutional status." But French-speaking Quebecers "view Canada as a nation of collectivities defined primarily by language," and think Quebec "needs special powers to defend itself and cannot be subject to the dictates of institutions representing the collective power of 'the English.'" Compromise between these worldviews is no longer possible, he believes.

"Most Canadians agree that the process of having a plebiscite on the future of Canada conducted in Quebec alone every 10 to 15 years must stop," Conrad Black says.

What happens next is up to the Quebecers, Joseph Jockel of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies concludes. English Canada, he says in the *Annals*, is presenting Quebec with a choice: "the current constitutional arrangements, take them or leave them."

China's Stillborn Industrial Revolution

"The Needham Puzzle: Why the Industrial Revolution Did Not Originate in China" by Justin Yifu Lin, in *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (Jan. 1995), 1130 East 59th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Until the last few centuries, the eminent British scholar Joseph Needham has shown, China was well ahead of the West in most areas of science and technology. Many historians agree that by the 14th century China was

on the threshold of a full-fledged scientific and industrial revolution. Yet it failed to cross that threshold—and when progress in the West accelerated after the 17th century, China lagged further and further behind. Left unresolved was the question of why it was unable to keep its early lead.

A widely accepted explanation among many scholars—first proposed by Mark Elvin, author of *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (1973)—has been that China's early adoption of such modern institutions as family farming, fee-simple ownership, and the market system

A Dream Dies in Africa

Washington Post reporter Keith B. Richburg, a black American from Detroit, covered Africa for that newspaper from 1991 to 1994. In the *Washington Post Magazine* (Mar. 26, 1995), he tells what he reluctantly found there.

This is not the story I sat down to write. Originally, I had wanted to expound on Africa's politics, the prospects of freedom and development, the hopes for the future. My tour in Africa, after all, came during what was supposed to be the continent's "decade of democracy"—after the fall of one-party communist states of Eastern Europe, the argument went, and the consolidation of democracy in Latin America, could Africa's one-party dictatorships and military regimes be far behind? . . .

But three years of following African elections, in countries as diverse as Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Mozambique, have left me—and many of those early, hopeful African democrats—far less than optimistic. I've seen elections hijacked or stolen outright, elections canceled, elections bought, and elections that have proved to be essentially meaningless. How can you talk about elections in countries where whole chunks of territory are under the sway of armed guerrillas? Where whole villages get burned down because of competing political loyalties? And where traditional belief runs so deep that a politician can be charged in public with casting magic spells over poor villagers to force them to vote for him?

African autocrats are proving far more en-

trenched, far more brutal, and far more adept at the manipulation of state machinery than their Eastern European communist counterparts. Africa's militaries—as compared with those in, say, South America—are proving less willing to return to the barracks and bow to the popular will. In country after country, even oppositionists demonstrate themselves to be grasping, quarrelsome, and in most cases incapable of running things if they ever do manage to make it to power. Politics in Africa is about lucrative spoils and fresh opportunities for corruption, and much of opposition politics across the continent consists of an out group wanting its turn at the feeding trough.

It's become a cliché to call tribalism the affliction of modern Africa, but, unfortunately, my years of covering African politics has convinced me that it is true. . . .

In trying to explain Africa to you, I needed first to try to explain it to myself. I want to love the place, love the people. I can tell you I see hope amid the chaos, and I do, in places like Malawi, even Mozambique. But the Rwandas and Somalias and Liberias and Zaires keep intruding into my mind. Three years—three long years—have left me cold and heartless. Africa is a killing field of good intentions, as Somalia alone is enough to prove.

gave it the initial edge. But thanks to a ballooning rate of population growth, there were so many people working the land by the 14th century that the incentive to create labor-saving technology was vastly diminished. Hence, the revolution did not occur.

Lin, an economist at Peking University, rejects this explanation. China's population increased until about 1200, when it was 115 million, he notes, but it then declined to about 81 million in 1400 before returning to about 115 million a century later. It continued to rise

during the 16th century, peaking at about 160 million around 1600, and then fell to about 140 million a half-century later. "If the man-to-land ratio were the valid explanation for the burst of labor-saving innovations up to the 12th century," Lin says, "then that rate should have been even higher in the 14th and 15th centuries and again in the mid-17th century."

China's industrial revolution was stifled not by a lack of demand for new technology, Lin argues, but by a shortage of supply: "In premodern times, most technological inven-

tions stemmed from the experiences of artisans and farmers, and scientific findings were made spontaneously by a few geniuses." The larger the population, the more artisans, farmers—and geniuses. Hence, China's comparative advantage. Modern technological change, however, mainly results from experiments and discoveries made by trained scientists. "China fell behind the West . . . because China did not make the shift from the experience-based process of invention to the experiment cum science-based innovation, while Europe did so through the scientific revolution in the 17th century," Lin says.

Why didn't China make this jump to modern science? Lin, following Needham, suggests that China's bureaucratic state deserves much of the blame. Government service was considered by far the most honorable and worthwhile occupation, and after the Song dynasty (960–1275), all bureaucrats were selected on the basis of competitive civil service examinations. Intellectually gifted Chinese had every incentive to spend years memorizing the Confucian classics and preparing for the exams, and thereafter to devote themselves to the bureaucratic life. The rewards and attractions of a career devoted to scientific research were, by comparison, very meager. As a result, Lin concludes, "despite her early lead in scientific achievement, China failed to have an indigenous scientific revolution."

Europe's 'New Populists'

"New Populist Parties in Western Europe" by Paul Taggart, in *West European Politics* (Jan. 1995), Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., Newbury House, 900 Eastern Ave., London IG2 7HH, England.

Jean-Marie Le Pen's strong showing in the French presidential election last April offered fresh evidence of the extreme Right's growing power in Europe. But it is a mistake to regard the Right as a monolithic phenomenon, argues Taggart, a lecturer in politics at the University of Sussex.

Some of the right-wing parties have historical links to fascism and clearly deserve

the "neofascist" label, he says. Among them are the National Alliance (formerly the Italian Social Movement) in Italy, the German People's Party and the National Democratic Party in Germany, the National Political Union in Greece, the National Front in Spain, the Christian Democratic Party in Portugal, the British National Front and the British National Party in England, and CP'86 in the Netherlands. All of these are essentially anti-immigrant parties.

Other far-right parties represent what Taggart calls a "New Populism." Although they often are explicitly or implicitly anti-immigrant, that is usually not the only basis of their appeal. Switzerland's Automobilists' Party was formed in reaction to the demands of environmentalists, while the New Democracy in Sweden and the Progress parties in Denmark and Norway have an antitax agenda. The New Populist parties generally purport to represent ordinary people, favor the market and freedom from state restrictions on individuals, and oppose "the system"—which includes "politics as usual," politicians, bureaucrats, intellectuals, and welfare recipients, as well as immigrants.

Some far-right parties—including such major ones as Le Pen's French National Front and the Republicans in Germany—do not fit neatly into either the neofascist or New Populist category, Taggart says. But most of them do—and the distinction is important, he argues. The avowedly racist and neofascist parties, as a whole, have gained a lot of publicity but have enjoyed much less success with voters than the New Populist parties have. Whereas most of the populist parties have won more than five percent of the vote in one election or another in recent years, the neofascist parties have not (with the notable exception of the Italian Social Movement, which got 14 percent in the 1994 parliamentary elections).

"The new wave of activity on the far right is . . . not a continuation of the long-term trend of neofascism," Taggart concludes, but rather "a formidable protest force." Eventually, he says, it may radically transform West European politics.